--- Five Cigars - “Benson & Hedges”, Montreal [34-10D] - 1959-67 ---

The control number on the copy of the Series “C” oblong black five cigar **RG-613** is **G9100671** which when matched to the list of controls in the *G-stamp* file indicates that the year is at least post-1939, while the control number **C2658922** on the copy of the fifty cigar strip **RG-625** places the date as post-1940, *however both of these examples are end-of-run items* and probably were held in stock for some years prior to their actual use. Since similar coded “Benson & Hedges” cancellations are found on **RG-681** - the fine roulette “**Series of 1960**” small strips - it seems highly probable that the correct dates for these two Series “C” *end-of-run* stamps are actually 1959 and 1960.

“Benson & Hedges” came to Canada in 1906 when Mr. Arthur Walsh, a bookkeeper with the London (U.K.) company, who had been placed in charge of New York in 1895, opened a branch store in Montreal.

In 1927 “Benson & Hedges” moved into Canadian cigar manufacturing by purchasing the assets of “J. Hirsch and Sons”, Montreal [**34-17** / **34-10D**] cigar makers since the late 1800’s. ***In July 1958***, “Philip Morris Inc.,” (which in 1954 had merged with “Benson & Hedges”, New York) also merged with “Benson & Hedges” (Canada).

From the box collection it can be noted that, for the period during and post-war, “Benson & Hedges” were not date coding their stamps, but was code dating the bottom of their boxes. The practice of code dating their stamps began in 1959, after the merger between *Philip Morris* and *Benson & Hedges*.

The *letter coded* cigar cancellations by “Benson & Hedges” seem difficult to decipher. The number coded examples (1959-1961) use a 3 mm. red Gothic *number coding* system which is straight-forward, with the month in numbers from **1** to **12** followed by the year as a single digit (e.g. **11 - 9 / 34 - 10D**).

From inspecting the collected examples, an educated guess for a “Benson & Hedges” ten letter *code word* would be - **PACKINGDEY** - representing **1234567890**. It just seems right, and fits the stamps in the cancellation collection. The English grammar may be poor, but it actually was *packing day*. In the past, I had assumed that the small green **RG-653** Series “C” stamps used by “Benson & Hedges” came from 1941-47, however judging by the collected examples of **RG-681** (from the “Series of 1960”) it is certain that these late use green five cigar Series “C” stamps come from 1960-65, and thus immediately precede use of the Lee Brandom “Series of 1965” small black “Coat-of-Arms” stamp **RG-716**.

In 1959-62 the *perforated* **RG-654** and the *imperforate* **RG-653** were used concurrently by “Benson & Hedges”. Most probably the *perforated* stamp was applied to imported cigars at the Bonded Warehouse. During 1962 the use of the *perforated* stamp appears to have ceased.

The collection contains two stamps (a *perforate* and an *imperforate*) which have been coded **A - B / 34-10D** -which I feel is a coding error for March 1962. Having used **A - A** for **2 - 2** in February 1962, the cancellation operator, forgetting the system, in March 1962 simply went to the use of **A - B** for **2 - 3**, thus ignoring the correct code letters - **C - A** for **3 - 2** in March 1962. [**PACKINGDEY** - **1234567890**]

NOTE: All of the black or red codes listed (e.g. **1ATC, 125,** **4205** etc.) are found in the cancellation collection. Any codes highlighted in yellow (e.g. **3BBC**) were taken from eBay and ***are not*** in the collection.

--- 5 Cigars - Series “C” [1939] - *perforated 11* - 22 x 28 mm. - scanned at 150% scale ---

--- RG-654 - “Benson & Hedges”, Montreal [34-10D] - 1959-60 ---

The cancellation collection contains the following copies of the five cigar *perforated* stamp code cancelled by “Benson & Hedges” between 1959 and 1963.

11 - 9 / 34-10D from November 1959

A - A / 34-10D from February 1962

[RG-654]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1959	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	11-9	---
1960	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	8-0	---	---	11-0	---
1961	---	---	---	---	5-1	---	---	8-1	9-1	10-1	---	---
1962	A-1	A-A	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

PACKING DEY ---------- P=1 A=2 C=3 K=4 I=5 N=6 G=7 D=8 E=9 Y=0

--- RG-653 - “Benson & Hedges”, Montreal [34-10D] - 1959-67 ---

The cancellation collection contains the following copies of the five cigar *imperforate* **RG-653** code cancelled by “Benson & Hedges” between 1959 and 1967.

8 - 9 / 34-10D from August 1959

C - G / 34-10D from March 1967

[RG-653]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1959	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	8-9	9-9	10-9	11-9	---
1960	---	---	---	---	5-0	---	---	8-0	9-0	10-0	---	---
1961	---	---	3-1	4-1	5-1	6-1	7-1	8-1	9-1	10-1	11-1	---
1962	---	A-A	C-A	K-A	---	N-A	G-A	D-A	E-A	PY-A	PP-A	PA-A
1963	P-C	A-C	C-C	---	I-C	N-C	G-C	D-C	---	PY-C	PP-C	PA-C
1964	P-K	---	C-K	K-K	I-K	N-K	G-K	D-K	E-K	PY-K	PP-K	PA-K
1965	P- I	A- I	C- I	K- I	I - I	N- I	---	D- I	E- I	PY- I	PP- I	PA- I
1966	P-N	A-N	---	K-N	I-N	N-N	G-N	D-N	---	PY-N	---	PA-N
1967	P-G	---	C-G	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	P=1	A=2	C=3	K=4	I=5	N=6	G=7	D=8	E=9	PY=10	PP=11	PA=12

A - B also occurs on the imperforate **G-333** - this is likely an error.

From June 1967 the small black “Series of 1965” five cigar “Coat-of-Arms” **RG-716** (used by “Benson & Hedges”) also occurs in the collection. See the following page.

--- 5 Cigars - black - *imperforate* - "Benson & Hedges", Montreal [34-10D] - 1965-69 ---

Lee Brandom lists **RG-716** as the "Series of 1965". It first occurs code cancelled by "Benson & Hedges" in June 1967 - scanned at 150% scale.

RG-716 - 5 Cigars, imperforate, coded **N - G / 34-10D** by "Benson & Hedges" in June 1967

[RG-716]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1967	---	---	---	---	---	N-G	---	---	E-G	---	PP-G	PA-G

To date these are the final code cancelled stamps in the "Benson & Hedges" collection. There may be others, but I have not located any copies. Their "Trump" cigar brand [**34-10D** in 1961] is later listed as coming from "Simon Cigars" [**47-10D**]. This code formerly belonged to "J.P. Forest Cigars", St. Jacques, l' Achigan P.Q. It would seem that Benson & Hedges absorbed "Simon Cigars" and "J.P. Forest", but maintained the *Simon* trade mark for cigar production using the "J.P. Forest" code, or that "Simon Cigars" absorbed both the *Benson & Hedges* and *J.P. Forest* brands. The later production of "Trump" by "Simon Cigars" abandoned the above coding system and went to a simple twin bead rollered cancellation.

Apparently "Benson & Hedges" (or "Simon Cigars") adopted a twin row red diamond roller cancellation which is illustrated below, and is shown on a package of **TRUMP** cigars. The second copy of **RG-716** illustrated below has been added merely to note its existence. Does it also come from "Benson & Hedges" / "Simon Cigars"? The additional diamond roller cancelled copy of **RG-653** is undoubtedly from "Benson & Hedges", Montreal.

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